

CHAPTER EIGHT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

GOAL: *Protect the City's physical and cultural heritage and encourage heritage tourism through historic preservation.*

POLICIES

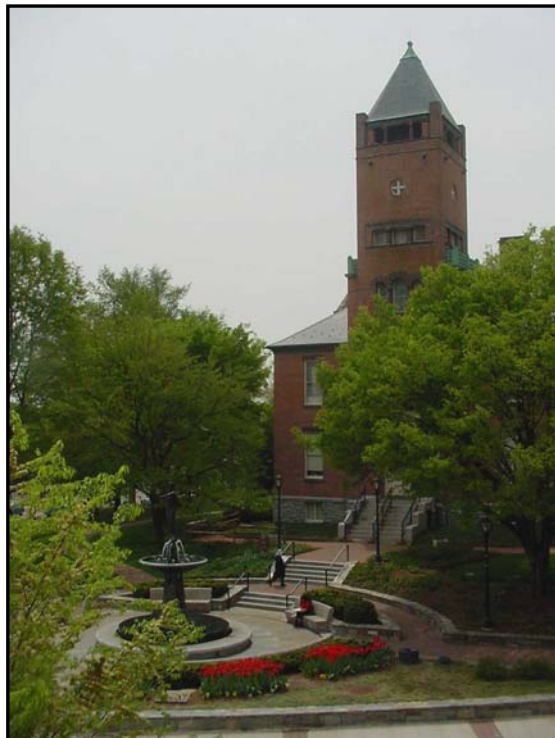
1. Identify the historic resources of the City as visual and physical reminders of the themes and periods in the City's development.
2. Preserve, protect, and maintain the physical and environmental integrity of an increased number of historic resources in Rockville.
3. Develop and encourage programs that lead to the enjoyment and appreciation of Rockville's historic sites and that encourage heritage tourism.

INTRODUCTION

During its history, Rockville has evolved from a small agricultural village, to the county seat, to a bedroom community for the federal government, and most recently to a commercial destination and high-technology center.

Despite this transformation, Rockville continues to maintain the special qualities of its historical periods. The original six streets that formed the town are still at the heart of the City (Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Montgomery (Commerce Lane), Middle Lane, and Wood Lane). The "great road", now Rockville Pike, is still a main arterial through the City. Many of Rockville's historic neighborhoods, buildings and sites, some dating to the 18th century, have been preserved to represent the historical, social and economic development the City has experienced.

The character of Rockville's old neighborhoods is retained through collections of houses that vary in age and architectural style but exist harmoniously along tree-lined streets. Houses represent the majority of the historic resources in the City. Rockville's earliest residences were constructed from hewn logs and covered with clapboards. Most historic houses in the City are simple frame structures, but a wide assortment of architectural styles and details are present including Federal, Classical Revival, Victorian Cottage, Italianate, Victorian Gothic, Second Empire, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Georgian Revival, Arts and Crafts mode, Bungalows, vernacular



period houses and tract houses. Many of these older houses exhibit characteristics of more than one style and some have been altered over time.

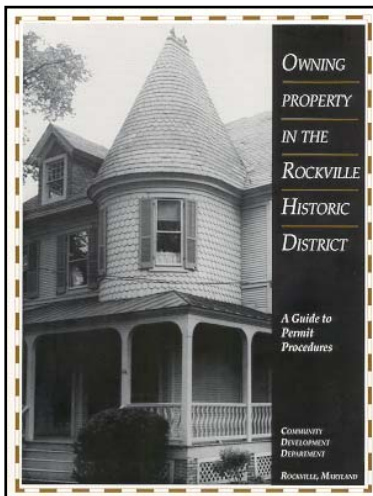
Reminders of the City's early commercial and institutional prominence also exist. These structures typically represent different architectural styles and construction methods from the residences. Some of these public buildings include the County Courthouse, the Rockville Academy, the Old Post Office, the B&O Railroad Station, and several churches. It is important to ensure that vestiges of the past are protected for future generations.

History and Authority of Historic District Zoning

Efforts to preserve historic resources in Rockville relied primarily on private initiatives until 1966 when the Mayor and Council established the Historic District Commission (HDC). The HDC was charged with preparing recommendations for establishing historic districts. In 1974, the Mayor and Council established the first three historic districts: the West Montgomery Avenue District, the South Washington Street District, and the B&O Railroad Station District.

The HDC continues to be responsible for recommending the designation of historic districts within the City. The Annotated Code of Maryland establishes five purposes for historic designation. They are:

- Safeguarding the heritage of Rockville by preserving districts that reflect cultural, social, economic, political, or architectural history;
- Stabilizing and improving property values within these districts;
- Fostering civic beauty;
- Strengthening the local economy; and
- Promoting the use and preservation of historic districts for the education, welfare, and pleasure of the residents of Rockville.



Historic district designation is implemented through an overlay zone defining specific historic sites and districts that reflect the cultural, social, economic, political, or architectural heritage of the City. Historic district designation is an effective preservation tool to protect period neighborhood character. Within designated historic districts and at single sites, the HDC has the authority to review changes to the exterior appearance of a structure or site to ensure changes are compatible with the structure and streetscape. County, state and federal tax incentives may reimburse up to 50% of the cost of renovations and maintenance.

The HDC is composed of five commissioners appointed by the Mayor and Council for three-year terms. Commissioners must be qualified through their education, knowledge, training, or demonstrated interest in fields such as history, preservation, architecture or urban design.

Eligibility Criteria for Historic District Designation

Rockville's eligibility criteria for historic district designation are based on similar standards employed by the U.S. Department of the Interior for properties eligible to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. However, local and National Register designations and associated designation processes are entirely separate. Potential historic districts (for one or multiple buildings) are evaluated for historical, cultural, architectural and design significance. Archeological sites are also eligible. Structures representing architectural styles, periods, and methods of construction which have particular significance to Rockville are given special attention. Integrity of workmanship and materials are considered. There are no date restrictions, although federal regulations require review of structures that are 50 years of age or older. The criteria are:



A. Historical and Cultural Significance

- Has character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, County, State or Nation;
- Is the site of a significant historic event;
- Is identified with a person or a group of persons who influenced society; or
- Exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historic heritage of the County and its communities.

B. Architectural and Design Significance

- Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction;
- Represents the work of a master;
- Possesses high artistic values;
- Represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- Represents an established or familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or county due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.



If the HDC finds that a site meets one or more of the above criteria, the level of significance (local, state or national) is determined and the condition of the structure and site is evaluated. Single site historic districts are held to a higher standard than contributing sites in a historic district that overall exemplify a particular period of history or development. Based on the City's Historic District Designation Criteria, the HDC either votes to recommend or not recommend the site to the Mayor and Council for designation. The final determination of a site's legal designation as a historic

district is made by the Mayor and Council through the Sectional Map Amendment process, which also includes a public hearing.

CURRENT STATUS: INVENTORY OF HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND SITES

Historic Districts

There are currently sixteen designated historic districts in the City as shown on the following maps. The West Montgomery Avenue historic district is the largest. The areas covered by historic districts are listed in the following table. The exact boundaries for all of Rockville's Historic Districts are shown on the City of Rockville zoning map.

Historic District	Year Est.	National Register*	Predominant Land Use	Time Period Represented
W. Montgomery Ave.	1974	Yes	Residential	Late 18th-20th Century
B&O Railroad Station	1974	Yes	Institutional/ Commercial	19th Century
541 Beall Avenue (Allnutt House)	1974	Yes	Single Site Residential	Built 1890
S. Washington Street	1974	Yes	Commercial/ Institutional	Late 19th-Early 20th Century
Courthouse Square	1979	Yes	Institutional	Late 19th-Early 20th Century
Dawson Farmhouses	1983	Yes	Residential	Built 1874, 1912
Lincoln High School	1989	No	Institutional	Built 1935
Wootton's Mill Park	2000	No	Public Park	19th Century
Wootton's Mill Miller's House	2000	No	Residential	Log dwelling built 1790; Expanded 19th Century
Rose Hill Mansion	2000	No	Residential	Built 1830-1849
Flint Ridge/Hurley Carter Farmhouse	2000	No	Residential	Built 1870
117 S. Van Buren Street (Evans House)	2002	No	Residential	Built 1923
710 West Montgomery Avenue (Ricketts Cottage)	2002	No	Residential	Built 1887
300 Reading Avenue (Kingdon House)	2002	No	Residential	Built late 19 th Century
Rockville Cemetery	2002	No	Institutional	Est. 1739
Haiti Cemetery	2002	No	Institutional	Late 19 th Century
Woodlawn Hotel/ Chestnut Lodge	2002	Yes	Institutional	Late 19 th - early 20 th Century

* National Register boundaries differ slightly from local district boundaries in some cases.

National Register Sites Not in City Historic Districts

Several sites in Rockville are listed in the National Register of Historic Places Districts or as National Register single sites, but are not designated as a Rockville Historic District. The HDC reviews these sites to determine impact and make a recommendation when demolition or exterior alterations are proposed that might change their historic character. These sites are listed below and depicted on the following maps.

National Register Site	Year Est.	Predominant Land Use	Time Period Represented
Bingham-Brewer House 307 Falls Road	1980	Residential	Built 1821
Jacquelin Trells Williams Park (surrounding Rockville Academy)	1974	Public Park	1809-Present
Farmers Banking and Trust Company (now Allfirst Bank) 4 Courthouse Square	1979	Commercial	Built 1930
Dawson Farm Park	1985	Public Park	19 th -20 th Century

Historic Resources

Historic resources include architectural, historic, cultural, archeological, and landscape resources significant to Rockville's heritage and development but are not designated as a historic district. They are not eligible for tax credits. Proposals for substantial alteration or demolition trigger an evaluation for historic designation. The HDC only has jurisdiction over these properties if they are designated by the Mayor and Council.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAMS

One objective of preservation is public education on the value of preserving and enjoying existing historic resources and community heritage. Community knowledge and involvement in preservation are key to protecting historic resources. Public relations programs and incentives to assist and educate citizens about Rockville's historic districts help property owners and interested individuals understand the importance of historic preservation as well as the goals and processes associated with maintaining the resources. The City partners with Peerless Rockville Historic Preservation, Ltd., the Montgomery County Historical Society, and the Lincoln Park Historical Society in producing such programs. The HDC also works with the City's Recreation and Parks Department for public events and programs as well as interpretation of City-owned historic sites.

City Preservation Publications

There are several historic preservation documents to guide preservation activities:

The Adopted Architectural Design Guidelines for the Exterior Rehabilitation of Buildings in Rockville's Historic Districts (1977)

Rockville Historic Districts Preliminary Preservation Plan (1977)

Recommended Historic Preservation Action Program (1980)

The Historic Resources Management Plan (1986)

Rockville Historic Buildings Catalog (1989)

Historic Resources Map (1987)

Audiovisual Presentation about Rockville's history and historic districts (1995)

Technical Briefs (Siding, Roofing, Windows and Doors, New Additions, New Construction, Fencing, Landscaping, Parking Lot, Signs, Utilities/Code Compliance, Relocation/Demolition, Color Selection)

Owning Property in the Rockville Historic District, A Guide to Permit Procedures (1996)

The Explore Rockville Walking Tour (2000)

For celebration of Rockville's 200th anniversary in 2001, Rockville, Portrait of a City, was published, and The History of Watts Branch and Wootton's Mill is in preparation. An interpretive brochure and plaques are planned for Dawson Farm Park and other public parks.

Historic Preservation Assistance Programs

Preservation of Rockville's history for the present and future enjoyment of its citizens is important, yet maintaining historic structures can place financial burdens on property owners. The City provides limited assistance programs designed to achieve preservation objectives. These programs are subject to change because of funding and changing conditions. Some of them, such as the Home Improvement Program operated by the Division of Inspection Services, are tied to economic eligibility and are not limited to historic district properties. Tax incentive programs are offered by Montgomery County, the State of Maryland, and the federal government for historic property owners.

Under Montgomery County's Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program, owners of property in Rockville's historic districts are currently eligible for property tax credits. The Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program credits 10% of the cost of eligible exterior maintenance or restoration. New construction, additions, interior work or replacement of original materials with modern substitutes are not covered. All work, except that defined as ordinary maintenance, must be certified by the Historic District Commission as contributing to the restoration or preservation of the property.

The state of Maryland has a goal of maintaining neighborhoods and helping residents who want to improve their properties in older neighborhoods. The Maryland Historic Tax Credit Program currently credits 20% of the improvement cost to state income tax owed. Eligible projects include work such as modernization of kitchens, bathrooms, and mechanical and utility upgrades, and exterior restoration and maintenance. The property must be designated as a contributing resource in a locally designated historic district or listed on the National Register, and the work must be certified by the Maryland Historical Trust prior to the start of the project.

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program promotes private sector rehabilitation of historic properties and economic development. The 20% credit is applied toward federal income taxes owed. Properties must be income-producing residential, commercial and industrial historic structures and must be rehabilitated according to standards determined by the Secretary of the Interior.

CRITICAL ISSUES

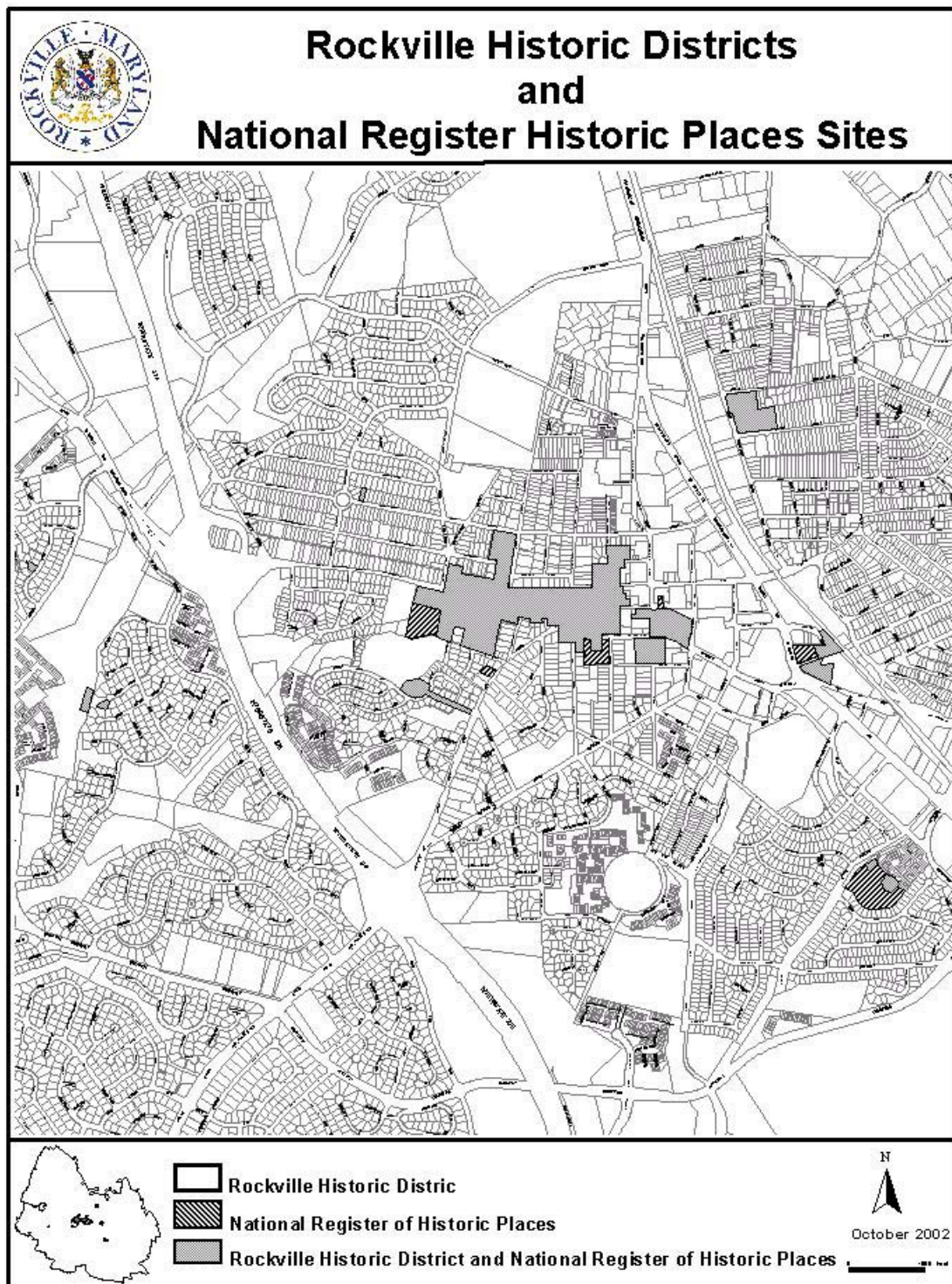
Expansion of Existing Historic Districts

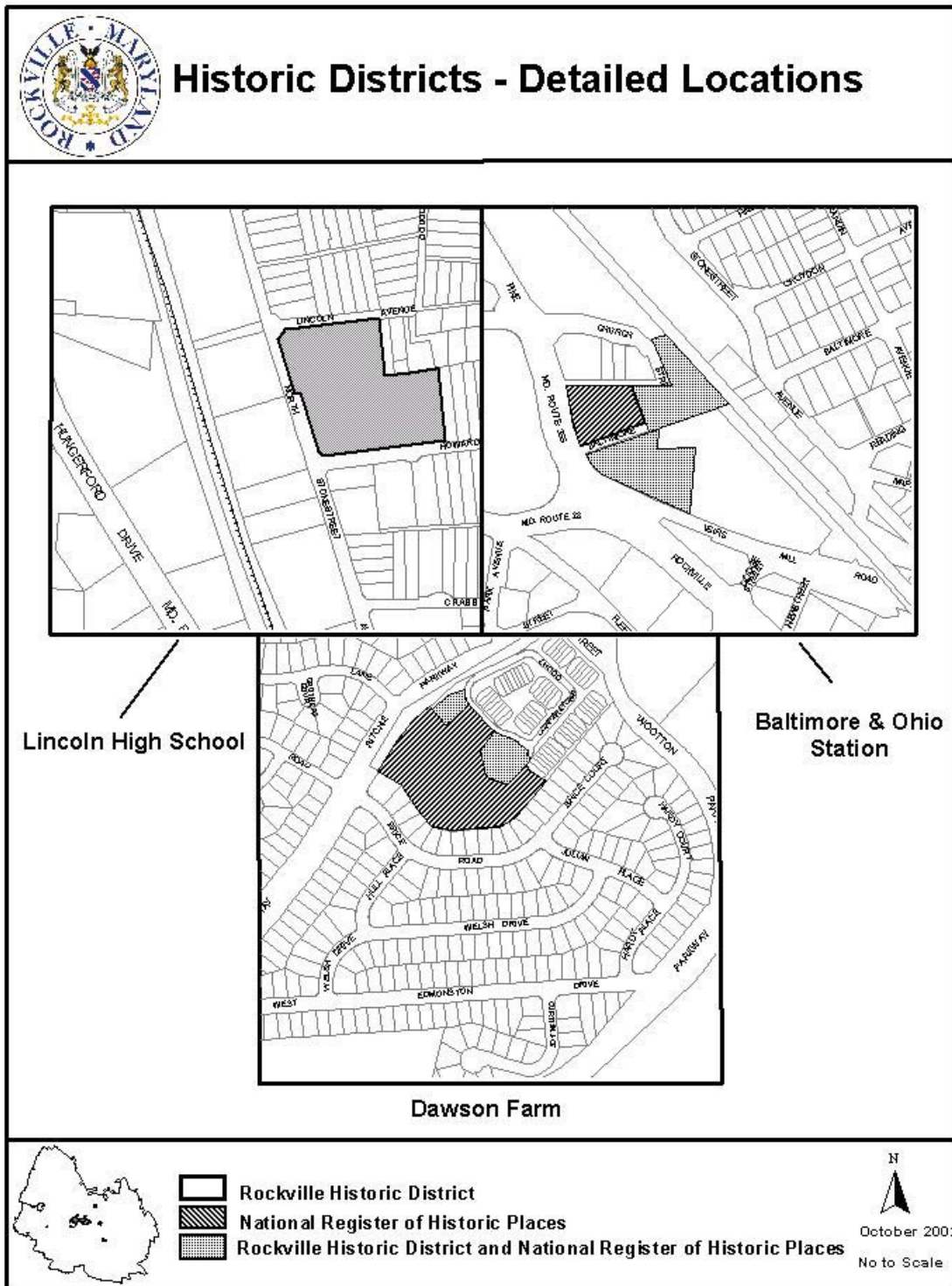
The Recommended Historic Preservation Action Program (1980) lists possible additions to the existing districts. Several of these potential additions are currently on the National Register of Historic Places but not in a City historic district. There are additional sites and structures that should be considered for possible inclusion in existing districts, primarily in the West Montgomery Avenue District. A planned, systematic approach to evaluation and potential expansion of the existing historic districts is desired, given the age and architectural significance of the much of the adjacent housing stock.

Montgomery Avenue District

The West Montgomery Avenue Historic District is predominantly comprised of residential structures that represent a wide range of architectural styles from the 18th to the 21st century. The district is located principally along West Montgomery Avenue and includes some structures on abutting side streets, such as North Adams Street, Wall Street, Thomas Street, and Forest Avenue. However, there are many more good examples of historical significance on some of these streets and on other streets surrounding the current district boundaries that deserve recognition. These include Victorian Cottages, Colonial Revivals, Jacobean, Arts and Crafts, and Bungalow styles. In addition, Chestnut Lodge/Woodlawn Hotel and the property surrounding Rockville Academy are logical additions to the district. The exact boundaries for the proposed expansion of the district will need to be determined after further study.

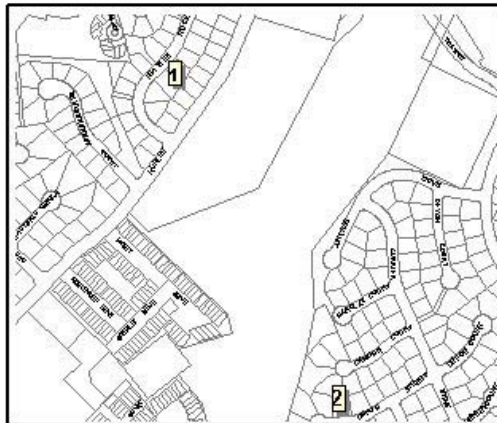








Historic Districts - Detailed Locations



1. West Montgomery Avenue
2. Courthouse Square
South Washington Street
3. Rose Hill
4. Bingham-Brewer House
5. 541 Beall Avenue

1. Hurley-Carter House
2. Wootton's Mill and
Miller's House



- Planning Historic Districts
- National Register of Historic Places
- Rockville Historic District and National Register of Historic Places



October 2002

Not to Scale

Courthouse Square District

The former Farmers Banking and Trust Company (now Allfirst Bank) Building is recommended for inclusion in the Courthouse Square Historic District. Built in 1930, it is Rockville's only example of Art Deco still in existence and completes the district. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

Dawson Farm District

The original Dawson Farm, located on Rockville Pike just north of Wootton Parkway, contained hundreds of acres of land, two farmhouses, and several outbuildings. Into the 1970s, the Dawson Farm, with approximately 14 acres of land remaining, survived as one of the few farms within the corporate limits of the City. Since the farmhouses are already located within historic districts, it is appropriate that the land between them (currently owned by the City as parkland) be included in the district to tie the two single-unit districts into a cohesive entity.

Recommendation

1. Expand existing historic districts to include historically, culturally and architecturally important sites and properties, by undertaking a thorough evaluation of prospective sites and working with property owners.
2. Expand educational efforts to provide a better understanding of the benefits of historic designation by prospective historic district property owners.

Potential Designation of New Historic Districts

There are several areas in Rockville that may be eligible for future designation as historic districts. When considering possible new districts, it is necessary to consider the public purpose for creating new districts, historical and architectural criteria for determining eligibility, the desires of the community within the proposed districts, the advantages and disadvantages of designation, any financial or fiscal benefits or burdens associated with designation, and other factors. Although Rockville's housing stock built 50 or more years ago should be evaluated, structures that were built prior to 1945 should be the top priority areas for new districts.

George Washington Carver High School and Junior College was the only institution built for African-American secondary and post-secondary students in Montgomery County's racially segregated educational system.

Carver was also the first Montgomery County public school to be named for an African-American individual, the eminent educator and scientist, George Washington Carver. The building has been in continuous use since it was built in 1951. It is now called Carver Educational Services Center, and is the headquarters of Montgomery County Public



Schools. Despite multiple additions to this brick structure, much of the east (main) façade appears much as it did originally. Historic designation of a portion of the site is pending.

Lincoln Park dates to the 1890s and is a significant community in Rockville. It is composed predominantly of single-family homes set on deep lots with a rural openness. Lincoln Park Cemetery, on a prominent hill above Frederick Avenue, reveals the age of the community with grave markers dating back to 1917. The Lincoln Park Civic Association is in the process of preparing a nomination form, the first step in the historic designation process.

Haiti/Martin's Lane has a long and significant history as a black neighborhood dating to about 1830 when free black landowner, Samuel Martin, settled there. At the end of the Civil War, Margaret Beall sold a large tract of her land on the northern section of her property to the freed family slaves which enlarged the development. There have since been two more major periods of development. Most of the residents have lived in Haiti all their lives. There are several family enclaves which promote a sense of continuity and history in the neighborhood. The Haiti Cemetery, which dates to the 19th century, is still owned and maintained by family members. Several historic properties are in the historic designation process. Haiti Cemetery is now a designated Historic District.

The Baltimore Road historic area is located across the railroad tracks from the existing B&O Station Historic District. The area is a late 19th century neighborhood which developed following the arrival of the railroad. Baltimore Road and portions of Reading and Grandin Avenues have a distinctive flavor that set off the immediate area from later adjacent residential development.

The Rockville Civic Center and grounds is a 66-acre complex centered around an imposing, pillared Neo-Classical mansion (constructed 1926), which incorporated the main block of the 1838 house called "Glen View." In the 19th century, this property was associated with Hon. Richard Johns Bowie, whose career included service in the Maryland State Legislature, the judiciary, and the U.S. Congress. Since 1957, the house and grounds have been owned by the City of Rockville and are used for varied civic, cultural, and social events. Portions of this property have been identified as National Register eligible.



The Twinbrook neighborhoods typify post World War II housing. Moderately-priced single-family detached housing situated on relatively large lots is a class of housing that is no longer being built and probably will never be built again due to high land costs. Each section of the Twinbrook neighborhoods should be researched, eligible sections identified, and historic designation pursued where appropriate.

Scattered sites: A large number of individual structures built before 1945 are located throughout the central area of the City. Property owners are encouraged to nominate their property for historic designation. In some cases, individual sites may become part of an adjacent historic district.

National Register sites should be designated as local historic districts. Currently the HDC reviews these sites to determine impact and make a recommendation. If a substantial impact is found, the HDC may recommend designation as a local historic district.

Recommendations

1. Evaluate neighborhoods, structures and sites that may have historical, cultural, architectural and/or design significance for possible designation as local historic districts within the next several years, with particular emphasis on structures built prior to 1945.
2. Consider designation of current and future National Register sites as local historic districts.
3. Work with neighborhood associations and nonprofit groups to generate historic district nominations.
4. Evaluate neighborhoods for potential designation as part of the neighborhood planning process when appropriate.

Alternative Preservation Tools

Alternative methods of protection are sometimes needed for historic resources in the absence of local designation. Historic resource management plans can facilitate the management and operation of historic resources by setting priorities for decision-making, identifying stresses, assets and liabilities, presenting recommendations for the preservation and enhancement of the resource and its context, and guiding implementation of the recommendations.



Cemeteries are particularly threatened resources as they are vulnerable to vandalism, neglect, deterioration from environmental elements, and development pressures. Yet, they have significant historical and archeological value. Some, such as the Old Baptist Cemetery and St. Mary's Church Cemetery, the Rockville Cemetery, and the Haiti Cemetery are protected because they are in historic districts. Others, such as the Lincoln Park Cemetery, are in need of protection. If they are determined to be ineligible for designation, alternative preservation methods should be explored.

Recommendations

1. Encourage the preparation of historic resource management plans as an alternative preservation tool for publicly owned properties.
2. Encourage archeological surveys of old cemeteries where the boundaries are obscured and document current conditions.
3. Determine appropriate methods to protect and maintain cemeteries.
4. Prepare a written interpretation of cemeteries to relate their history.

Enhancement of the Individual Character of Historic Districts

The historic districts should be distinguished through appropriate sidewalk treatment, undergrounding of utilities, streetscape amenities, street light and street tree plans, and signage. Such improvements would aid in the promotion of heritage tourism. Linkages between historic districts, such as along West Montgomery Avenue, Jefferson Street and Church Street, should be explored while each district's unique qualities are retained. The residential character in the O-2 (Transitional Office) Zone should be continued even though many of the structures are now used for non-residential purposes.

Maintenance and proper restoration of properties are essential to preserving neighborhood character in the historic districts. The HDC ensures that this occurs through the Certificate of Approval process. The process can be facilitated through the provision of clear and up to date replacement policies. These policies should identify acceptable materials and conditions for approval for replacement roofs, shutters and other architectural features. Tax credits and other financial incentives for property upkeep should also be emphasized.

Recommendations

1. Develop streetscape plans for the historic districts.
2. Explore ways of providing linkages between districts.
3. Retain the residential character in the O-2 (Transitional Office) Zone.
4. Encourage the placement of house markers and plaques to identify significant historic structures.
5. Schedule an update of the Architectural Guidelines and develop clear replacement policies.
6. Emphasize the tax advantages of owning eligible property in the historic districts to citizens.
7. Explore the development of, or participation in, a revolving loan program to help citizens finance expensive renovations.

Clarification of HDC Jurisdiction

The environmental setting and context of a historic district is enhanced by adjacent areas that are compatible. The HDC should review development proposed in adjacent and abutting areas at the preliminary planning and review process to prevent harmful impacts on the nearby historic properties. The review would not be intended to impose any particular architectural style on the property owner and it would not give the HDC additional authority equal to that which it exercises in the historic districts, but it would minimize negative effects on the historic district properties. For example, if a historic building has a large front setback, it may be appropriate to provide a larger than normal setback for a new building on an adjacent lot. The challenges to establishing this process include determining the boundaries that are sufficient to protect without excessively interfering with the decisions of property owners outside of the historic district, and developing guidelines that will clearly establish the rights and responsibilities of both the applicant and the HDC.

The number of developable parcels in Rockville is limited. Due to development patterns of the past, larger lots can be found in and around the historic districts. This can lead to pressures to subdivide properties as allowed by current standards. While this can be appropriate in specific circumstances, it is important that the character of the designated historic districts be maintained.

The City's policies and ordinances affecting historic resources should be examined to ensure that they maintain or promote stability for historic resources. In particular, the status of inventoried historic resources should be clarified as potential historic districts that require review before any substantial exterior alteration may occur. HDC review of any structure or site "more than 50 years of age, possessing architectural significance, or associated with a person or event of importance to local, state or national history or development" should also be required when substantial alteration or demolition is proposed as is stated in the City's Environmental Guidelines. Major alteration or demolition activity in any potential district should be evaluated by the HDC to determine if designation is recommended or proposed modifications are appropriate.

Current penalties for unapproved demolition, including demolition by neglect, do not adequately protect the City's historic resources. Exterior changes to historic resources completed without a Certificate of Approval or HDC review, or in opposition to HDC recommendations, also carry minimal penalties. Penalties should be sufficient to inhibit such actions. Any historic resource that is not recommended for designation after the HDC review process and is slated for demolition should be documented with regard to its architectural, social and historical elements before demolition occurs.

Recommendations

1. Update the Historic Buildings Catalog.
2. Ensure that applications involving exterior changes or new construction on properties abutting or opposite historic districts are referred to the HDC for review and comment early in the permit and/or development process.
3. Develop a program to identify and protect unimproved land that contributes to the environmental character of historic districts
4. Promote historic property easement donations to preserve open space.
5. Reevaluate the City's policies and ordinances regarding penalties for demolition and demolition by neglect of historic resources.
6. Reevaluate the City's policies and ordinances regarding penalties for exterior changes to historic resources completed without a Certificate of Approval or in opposition to HDC recommendations.
7. Increase fines for violating Historic District Commission requirements and conditions.

Promotion of Education, Economic Development, and Heritage Tourism

Appreciation for the City's history, neighborhood histories, and the importance of historic preservation should be promoted via Rockville history publications and education programs. Publications and programs should also help property owners and interested individuals understand the goals and processes associated with maintaining the resources, as well as the benefits of historic designation and preservation.

Rockville's Historic Preservation Program should support heritage tourism and contribute to the City's economic development goals by promoting Rockville as an interesting and attractive place to live, work, and visit. The City will also take advantage of any State sponsored program to encourage heritage tourism in Rockville. The economic benefits and the "smart

growth” objectives inherently achieved by preservation of the City’s historic districts and resources should be emphasized.

Recommendations

1. Encourage the preparation of Rockville history publications, including neighborhood histories.
2. Continue education programs to help property owners and interested individuals understand the importance of historic preservation and the proper maintenance of historic properties.
3. Promote and encourage historic tourism opportunities.
4. Continue to maintain a working relationship with other local and state preservation groups and agencies.